RAILWAY JOTTINGS.

A wooden bridge, covered with gas tar, on the Sheffield and Rotherham Railway, caught fire lately in consequence of the contents of the fire-box having been thrown on the bridge.——The rate on the Eastern Counties Railway, in the parish of St. Matthew, Bethnal-green, comprising 67 furlongs of line, with stations, has, after a sharp contest, been adjusted at 5,000*l.* per annum.——Messrs. Fox and Henderson have contracted for the new station of the Oxford Branch of the North-Western, at Oxford, to be opened in May. The station will be 100 yards in length, and will be entirely built of glass and iron. A committee from London is expected at Oxford in a few days to decide on the locality of the station, which it is expected will be in the Botley-road, near the Castle. The tender to build it on the "Crystal Palace" plan, modified to suit the peculiarities of railway requirements, was nearly 20 per cent. lower than any other it is said.——The site of the great central station at Birmingham has been marked out so far by the plans and estimates of rails and crossings already prepared. The junction of the Midland with the London line has been completed, and on Wednesday some part at least of the Derby passenger traffic was to be brought up to the London station.——The Hereford and Shrewsbury line is on the way to realisation. The tunnels will be begun first: three have been surveyed and all marked out: four shafts of seven feet diameter will be sunk at Dinmore-hill. The contractor, on applying to Mr. Arkwright as to where he was to quarry the stone, was granted permission to do so wherever he could find it most convenient for his purposes. The contractor will commence simultaneously at many points of the line. The sub-contractors will sign their contract in the course of a week or two; so that, in the beginning of February, the works will be in operation throughout the line.——The works on the Londonderry and Coleraine line will commence immediately. Mr. M'Cormick, the contractor, has purchased Limhally House and lands, and yesterday Mr. George Green, his agent, bought the farm nearly adjoining it, at 930*l.*, at Walters's Auction Mart. This farm is held under lease, renewable, at the rent of 14*l.* 6s. 6d., and contains 32 acres of land. The first fruits of the railway formation here, as elsewhere, is the enhancement of the value of property in the vicinity, this farm having been sold at about twenty-eight years' purchase.——The Prussian minister of commerce has concluded an arrangement with the Prussian railway companies, by which all Prussian workmen and *industriels* going to England to visit the "world's fair" will be conveyed in second-class carriages at third-class fares.——A company is being formed at Madrid to convey our Spanish visitors to the great gathering of the nations. They are to pass through France, and to stay three days in Paris. Their residence in London is to be about a fortnight, and the expense of the whole trip will not exceed from 1,000*f.* to 1,200*f.*, according to *Galignani*.——Mr. F. E. Colegrave, of Brighton, has patented improvements in slide-valves, in causing the driving-wheels of locomotives to bite the rails, and in supplying water to steam-boilers. For causing the wheels to bite the rails, the patentee proposes to convey a stream of heated air against the rails, immediately in front of the driving-wheels, which, in damp and slippery weather, it is said, would be almost instantaneously dried; and also to connect together by a band the leading, driving, and trailing wheels, securing cohesion between the wheels and rails. The patentee also proposes to heat the water before it is conveyed to the boiler, by causing it to pass through water spaces on three sides of the ash-pan.——Mr. J. W. Hoby, of Blackheath, has taken out a patent for a method or methods of securing rails upon longitudinal or transverse bearers, by curved or angular lips on one side, and by bolts and nuts passing through one of the flanges of the rail on the other; or by curved or angular dogs, and bolts and nuts, or by means of ribs or studs, and keys, on the other; the application of chucks along each side of a line of rails, either with or without keys, for securing rails to sleepers; a method of constructing the troughs of longitudinal iron trough-sleepers, for holding and securing the rails, so that one side of each trough shall fit to and support one side of the rail placed within it, and that a key may be introduced on one side the rail; for a method of constructing stretchers of hollow iron, and railway keys, of bent and curved forms, of metallic tubing, filled with wood; and also for an application of a combination of rollers or dies for forming strips of sheet-iron for the purpose.——Mr. J. C. Hadden, of Bloomsbury, has patented some improvements in the construction of railway carriages and wheels. The sides and end pieces of the under framing of railway carriages are to be constructed with bars or plates, the ends of which are bent so that, when placed together, the bendings may lap round each other, in such manner that the corners of the carriages shall be double, or of two thicknesses of metal. The transverse and diagonal ties are constructed with bars bent so as to hold the ends and sides together. The framing of the sides and ends of carriages are constructed with diagonal bracings, or struts, cut flush with the other timbers of the framing. The external covering of the sides and ends of the bodies are placed against or upon the framing, the several parts of which are made flush with each other, for the purpose of securing them in position. The improvements in railway wheels are thirteen in number, all based on constructions previously patented.——Eighty railway bills have been lodged in the Private Bill Office, having thus surmounted the first two stages of parliamentary initiation. "The enterprise of the country," says the *Railway Times*, "can in no way be considered as having receded from railway extension or improvement. The list of bills shows that a greater degree of caution than was wont is settling itself down upon railway management, and that is as good a symptom as we could desire to see."

NOTES IN THE PROVINCES.

A NEW school has been built at Milton Ernest, and was opened on the 2nd inst.——Some improvements are being made in High-cross-street, Leicester, by the pulling down of old houses, and the erection of new shops with plate glass fronts, &c.——It was proposed to erect a bridge over the Cam, near Fort St. George, but some obstacles have been thrown in the way of such an application of the money intended to be devoted to the purpose.——The Northampton Mechanics' Institute has now a library of 10,000 volumes, and an income of upwards of 200*l.* a year.——On 1st inst. a new Baptist Chapel was opened at Ryde. The building is capable of seating comfortably about 250 persons, and has been reared at the cost of about 400*l.* of which 200*l.* have been collected.——The design for providing church accommodation for the Haven-street district at Ryde, has long been contemplated. A gentleman has, within the last few days, made to the Rev. W. S. Phillips an offer of one hundred pounds towards the building, with an intimation of a probable contribution in aid of the endowment. It is proposed to erect a small church capable of holding a hundred persons—all the sittings to be free. A site for church and burial-ground has been promised by Mr. T. W. Fleming. The work will be commenced early in the spring, if a reasonable prospect of completion be afforded.——A meeting was held at the Independent Chapel, Parchment-street, Winchester, on Thursday week, to commence a subscription for a new chapel. The Rev. W. Thorn announced subscriptions from the Rev. E. T. Prust, of Northampton, of 1,000*l.*, and from himself one of 500*l.* Several other subscriptions, varying from 50*l.* to 5*l.*, were promised, and a committee was formed to collect subscriptions. The total expense of a new chapel, and a British School adjoining, it is supposed, will reach 3,000*l.*——It is understood that the Dean of Salisbury has liberally undertaken to complete the works at the cathedral at his own expense.——The new National School-rooms, at Wribbenhall, Worcestershire, the site for which was given by Lord Ward, and the building of which cost more than 500*l.*, raised by voluntary contribution, were opened on Wednesday week. They at present accommodate one hundred and twenty-three children.——A mural tablet, bearing military emblems and inscription, has recently been erected in the chancel of the parish church of Preen, in the county of Worcester, to the memory of Major-General Clement Hill, who died at the Falls of Guersoppa in 1845.——On Tuesday in last week, the ceremonial of consecrating the newly-erected church of Allington, near Amesbury, Wilts, was performed by the Bishop of Salisbury. The new edifice is, we understand, an exact copy of the original structure, which had fallen into decay. It is erected of flint, with stone dressings, and consists of a single aisle and chancel, with a battlemented tower on the south-west side, which is surmounted by a gilt cross, and contains a peal of three bells. The interior of the church is of the most simple character. The aisle or nave is lighted by two windows, containing merely a single mullion dividing the lights, which are cusp-headed. The roof is of open woodwork, stained to imitate oak. The chancel (which is paved with Minton's encaustic tiles), is separated from the nave be a low arch and a small wooden screen, and contains several windows,—those on either side being of the Early English character, while the east window is in the Middle-pointed or Decorated style.——A Plymouth tradesman has succeeded in making cast-iron horseshoe magnets, to lift 150 lbs., at a cost of 30s. each.——At the Radnorshire Epiphany Sessions, it was resolved "to consult some eminent engineer as to the desirability of adopting wood or iron columns" before proceeding to repair the Radnorshire half of Glasbury bridge, which has fallen into a state of decay. At same sessions the chairman remarked that some unfounded reports had got abroad respecting the safety of the new chain bridge which had recently been erected at Disserth. Mr. Davies, Moorcourt, was passing over it a short time since, in his carriage, when one of the chains broke. Mr. Ladmore was bound by his contract to keep the bridge in proper repair for seven years.—Mr. Davies said he had examined the piece of chain which had been broken, and it showed a most defective state of the iron. It was just that sort of defect which had shaken his confidence as to the rest of the fabric.—The County Surveyor said he had thoroughly examined the bridge, both before and after its erection, and was unable to detect any flaw in the iron. Now, that the bridge was painted, it would be almost impossible to perceive any flaw, even if it existed. He believed the bridge now to be perfectly safe.—— A grant of works of art, including a large collection of engravings, casts of sculptured ornaments, &c., has been made by the Board of Trade for the use of the drawing-classes in the Mechanics' Institution at Liverpool.——The first stone of St. Augustine's Church, in the parish of Edgbaston, Birmingham, was to be laid on the 16th inst.——The Staffordshire Potteries are overdone with orders, and a considerable advance has taken place in the prices. The foreign orders are more extensive than they have been for some years, and the general business is excellent.——In the Sheffield Council last week a committee was appointed to inquire as to erecting a municipal hall, which, besides accommodation for the council, should contain a large room for public meetings, &c.; the committee to have power to advertise for sites and consult with architects. The mover of the resolution said that the rent they paid there was 190*l.* per annum. That represented the interest on a considerable sum of money at a low rate of interest. It had long been felt that a public hall capable of containing 3,000 or 4,000 people was much wanted. It did not appear that private enterprise would suffice, for a meeting was held some time ago at the King's Head, and a majority of those present appeared to have been architects and solicitors. The mode of obtaining the funds would not be by any special rate, but by drawing money from the overseers out of the poor-rate as the building proceeded, or the raising of the funds might be spread over a greater number of years.——Morton Church, which has been rebuilt by general subscription, and the whole work completed in five months, was re-opened on the morning of New Year's-day.——The committee appointed at Bradford on 26th November last, respecting the enlargement or re-building of the parish church, have engaged the services of Mr. P. C. Hardwick, and his report of the present state of the fabric and the measures required for its restoration and for increasing the accommodation of the

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